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INDIANA K-9s

STATE POLICE



PROTECTING AMERICA'S CROSSROADS

by Sgt. Ron Galaviz

During the 79 years of existence and service to citizens, the Indiana State Police (ISP) has evolved from the state's first traffic patrol and crash investigative agency into a multi-faceted, multi-disciplined law enforcement agency. Troopers and detectives have used the latest technologies to track down gangsters such as John Dillinger to modern day cyber criminals set on stealing unknowing victim's identity for their own benefit. But it wasn't until relatively recently the ISP has used a tool that has been used by man from the earliest of time, his self-proclaimed "best friend"- the dog, or as we call them, our K-9 partners.

SINCE 2006 THE ISP K-9 PROGRAM HAS TALLIED THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS:

Tracks	1026
Apprehensions	421
Searches (Drugs)	9999
Arrests	4776
Searches (other)	3289
Assist other agencies	4667

Seizures	\$8,557,637
Meth	56 lbs.
Marijuana	11,167 lbs.
Cocaine	327 lbs.
Heroin	19 lbs.
Crack	5 lbs.
Ecstasy	3 lbs.

**These numbers are only representative of the road patrol K-9s and do not take into account the five Drug Enforcement Section K-9's or the three Explosive Detection Dogs utilized by the Capitol Police Section of the ISP.*



In 1990 the ISP embarked upon a program to utilize canines for the sole purpose of narcotics detection as part of the traffic patrol component. Four troopers were selected through a competitive selection process and paired with their new K-9 partner to begin training for their new duties. Over the course of time, these canines transitioned from road patrol duties to the ISP's Drug Enforcement Section (DES).

ISP Superintendent Paul E. Whitesell, PhD. implemented a program that started with three canines and had them cross-trained in narcotics detection, tracking, article and person searches and most importantly, handler protection. The selection for prospective handlers would include an application through the appropriate channels with endorsements and participation in the Department's competitive interview process. The prospective K-9 handlers also had to have a little bit of salesmanship since they had to be willing and able to raise funds toward the purchase, training, housing, equipment and overall welfare and expense to care for the canine. The goal for each prospective handler to raise was \$17,477 plus an additional \$800 for annual maintenance.

Superintendent Whitesell's vision was for the program to "stand alone" in that funding of each team would be

the responsibility of each handler and independent of the department's annual budget. The Indiana State Police Alliance Foundation (ISPAF), a not-for-profit (501c3) entity provides an avenue for contributors to donate funds to support the K-9 program. Donations, which benefit the program 100%, come from a variety of sources such as County Prosecutor funds, public fund raising and donation matching events.

Donations from other sources, such as the Tony Stewart Foundation (TSF), have been a great benefit to the program as well. In 2008, a presentation was made by the NASCAR superstar's foundation just before the annual Brickyard 400 NASCAR race in which 30 ballistic vests were provided for the ISP K-9 program, a value of \$27,000. A \$6,000 donation for a replacement K-9 was also made by the TSF since that time. Another source of monetary support has come from Carolyn Dudley, widow of ISP Lieutenant Gary Dudley, who lost his life in August 2006 during a bicycle ride to support fallen police officers. Ms. Dudley's fund raising efforts and endorsement of the K-9 program has led Sgt. Knox to dub her the program's "best supporter." One of the ISP K-9s is named "Dudley" in honor of Lt. Gary Dudley. With family permission, there are a number of department K-9s named after fallen troopers.

[**K9** featured department]



Trooper Stephen Wheelles and Kane working a track during training with ISP Emergency Response Team



Kane with his vest which was donated by the Tony Stewart Foundation

Since 2006, the number of ISP patrol K-9 teams has increased to a maximum authorized total of 31. Today, there are 28 patrol K-9 teams, and each team has been trained by Master Trainer Robert Compton of the Allen County Sheriff Department at their K-9 training facility on the northern edge of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Each of the teams must successfully complete a grueling 14 week training course which trains the team in drug detection, tracking, evidence (article) search, building search, obedience and controlled aggression. Each team received over 500 hours of training conducted during daylight and nighttime hours, as well as in varying weather conditions before being certified as ready to begin their patrol duties. Each handler knows this is really just the beginning of the training process that will mold them into a true team. The handlers know full well that like other tools in law enforcement, their four-legged partner will only be as good and successful as the training they are given after

graduation from K-9 school. According to Sgt. Knox "The 14 week school provides the environment in which the handler and his new partner learn about each other and their tendencies, along with teaching each of them what skills are necessary to work together as a team. Their utilization in the field and subsequent training provided by the handler will continue to sharpen and polish the dog's skills long after they've left K-9 school."

Sgt. Knox added that while Master Trainer Compton has provided his many years of K-9 training expertise, the ISP was able to contribute the following courses to the curriculum: Man Track Course, Preventing Repetitive Injuries, Drug Interdiction and Legal Updates. The curriculum has been used to train K-9 teams from across Indiana as well as from Illinois and Ohio.

Aside from their duties on the road, the ISP K-9 teams are asked to go out into the public to inform and educate citizens about the special role K-9 handlers and their



Above: Trooper Brad Shultz and Gunnar during training exercise at IPWDA last October

Right: Trooper Ryan McNamara and Zane going through their paces as part of training exercises



four-legged partners play in modern law enforcement. The handlers and their partners are highly sought after for programs ranging from the “show and tell” type of program for school aged children to actual demonstration programs for adults and business groups. At these various programs the public gets the chance to see the capability of these highly skilled animals and their handlers. We’ve also found the K-9’s can be one of our best recruiting tools for men and women interested in a law enforcement career.

In October 2011, the ISP was the proud host of the International Police Work Dog Association (IPWDA) National Workshop. The workshop took place at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in South Central Indiana and included realistic training scenarios designed to improve and enhance K-9 handler effectiveness. Scenarios included narcotics searches, explosives searches, handler protection, building clearance/searches and tracking. K-9 teams from across the United States and

from as far away as South Korea were in attendance for this annual event.

The ISP expects to continue to evolve the K-9 program by hosting its own training school as early as the spring of 2012. Just recently, Sgt. Dennis Wade, a 15 year member of the Department was awarded the Master Trainer accreditation by IPWDA, the first in the history of the ISP. Wade and his partner, Mojo, while in the Drug Enforcement Section, were responsible for some of the largest seizures in the history of the ISP with over two million dollars in US currency, 100 kilos of cocaine, and 2,000 pounds of marijuana seized. Sgt. Knox stated “This is a giant step within the Indiana State Police K-9 Program and will be most valuable to our department and the citizens of Indiana. It is because of his hard work and dedication that Dennis is the first trooper in the history of the ISP to become a K-9 Master Trainer”.



Left: Trooper Stephen Wheelles and Kane await deployment during training with ISP Emergency Response Team

Below: "Andy", Trooper Kevin Water, Trooper Brian Laroche and "Blackie" pose with a large seizure of narcotics

Indiana is known as the "Crossroads of America" because of the numerous interstate and US highway systems that traverse the state, connecting the Great Lakes to the Ohio River Valley and the Mid-West to the East Coast. As those who attempt to violate state and federal drug laws travel through Indiana, the current 28 patrol K-9 teams in service for the ISP will continue to work toward one of the Department's missions of addressing crimes and criminals with the use of proactive initiatives and the ISP K-9 program is the tip of the spear in this never ending endeavour. ■



About the author:

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For information on how to contribute to the ISP K-9 program, please visit the Indiana State Police Alliance website at www.indianasfinest.com and click on the "ISPA" tab to find the "ISP K-9" link.